Tales of the Neahkahnie Treasure

Prepared by the
NEHALEM VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
TREASURE COMMITTEE – 1991

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INTRODUCTION

The Nehalem Valley Historical Society Neahkahnie Treasure Committee has spent several years researching past publications and interviewing people. We intended giving a brief history of the legendary Neahkahnie treasure, then relating more recent efforts to solve the riddle of the mountain. So as treasure seekers went in search of the treasure, our committee went in search of the seekers. It was a fascinating quest.

How many shafts and pits were dug is unknown, but the committee visited many of these sites, from those fairly high on the mountain to the one dug in 1931 that collapsed, killing two men. We could only marvel at their tenacity as they followed the strength of their hopes and dreams. Has someone already discovered the treasure and quietly spirited it away? Or is it still there—waiting?

The Treasure Committee consists of Don Acker, Harris Culpepper, Nora Dunn, Pat Edley, Hal Larson, Charlotte Mast, Jona Muceus and Norma Seely.

THE TREASURE AREA

Neahkahnie Mountain, 1795 feet high, is located in Tillamook County on the Oregon Coast between the towns of Manzanita and Cannon Beach. On its western flank, Highway 101 is cut into sheer rock cliffs. To the south stretches miles of white sandy beaches. Visible from the mountain top is a panoramic view of ocean, mountains, timber, dairy farmland, the Nehalem River and bay. Access to the top of the mountain is made possible by a well maintained switchback trail. Walking time is forty-five minutes to one hour and fifteen minutes for those between seven and seventy.

In earlier times, the Indians set fires to clear the land so that the deer and elk would have new tender vegetation in the spring. Later the first settlers did the same so that cattle and sheep could graze on the abundant grass. Now the mountain is heavily forested in many places.

It is somewhere in this area, on the southwestern side between the ocean and the summit, that treasure seekers first started searching for the treasure, based on Indian legend and the discovery around 1890 of the first of several glyphic rocks.

THE MYSTERIES OF NEAHKAHNIE

Few things rival buried treasure in capturing the imagination. Legends of both the Clatsop and Tillamook Indians, tell of a "winged canoe" which sailed near Neahkahnie Mountain, home of the Tillamook Indians' fire god, and landed on the beach. There the men dug a hole, buried a heavy chest, laid a dead body over it, and covered it with a marked rock and sailed away.

This legend would probably be just another campfire tale, except several mysterious carved rocks have been located at various places on the mountain, giving rise to the theory that if the rocks exist then so must the buried chest. Lives have been lost and fortunes spent, by those who thought they had deciphered the puzzling hieroglyphics found on the rocks.

Over the last one hundred years, since Pat Smith found the first carved rock around 1890, untold numbers of people have tried to decipher these symbols. Have any of them succeeded? That is open to speculation, but to tell some of their stories is the purpose of this monograph, compiled by the Treasure Committee of the Nehalem Valley Historical Society.

The following tale is related in Vol. 1 of "Pioneering Days of Oregon History." Swan, an old Clatsop Indian, told that long ago a vessel was lost at Necarney (Neahkahnie was sometimes called this); that a number of her men came on shore, who carried a chest up the

mountain and buried it on a mountain terrace; they carried up sacks full of treasure and poured them into the chest, or placed the bags inside. Then the crew separated, some going north and some south. In the earliest days of the white men, the Indians would point out the mountain terrace where the treasure was supposed to be, but nothing could induce them to go near the spot.

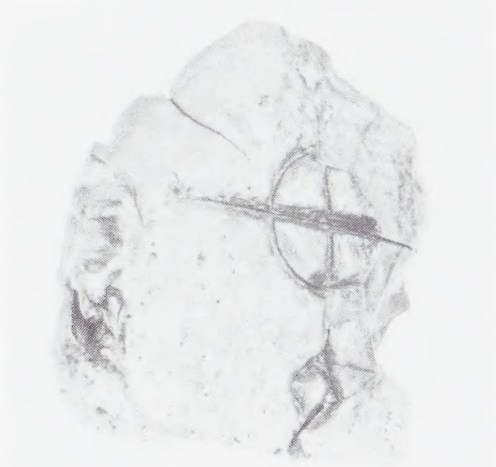
The most popular choice of what lies buried on the mountain is pirate treasure, but there are those who disagree. Wayne Jensen and Don Viles feel they have found something quite different, but as rich historically. They have contributed their theories to this booklet.

Despite Jensen's and Viles' well-documented claim to have solved the secret of Neahkahnie's glyphic stones, others persist in the search for treasure. They are certain it still lies buried somewhere on the mountain and that they alone have solved the riddle. Their tales are also included. We thank Orval Keller, Ken Hughes, Wayne Jensen, Don Viles, and Ed Fire for their willingness to contribute, just as we thank John Prentiss and Jim Webb for showing us the sites of several early diggings. Many are hard to identify, having returned to nature, others are actual open pits which yawn ominously while the ocean echoes like distant thunder in sea caves below.

THE BEESWAX SHIP AND THE TREASURE SHIP

While the sands of Neahkahnie beach have not yielded a chest of gold and silver coins they have relinquished a tantalizing amount of beeswax. The Indians found large chunks on the beach and first brought it as trade goods to the white man. Many people once thought the beeswax ship and the treasure ship might be one and the same. It is widely accepted now that they were not. Researchers studying Spanish records have established that the beeswax ship was very probably the *San Francisco Xavier*, a Spanish Manila galleon blown off course on its way from the Philippines to the missions of California and Mexico. Beeswax was highly prized for candles and therefore a treasure in itself.

A large slab of beeswax, closely resembling polished stone, holds a place of honor on a shelf over the fireplace of Manzanita resident, Helen Hollensted. Found by her husband, Waldemar H. Hollensted, in the middle or late 1930's, the beeswax came from the beach sands not far from the present Nehalem Bay State Park.



This piece is approximately 15" by 18", roughly square, although a corner and odd bits have broken off at sometime in the past. The slab is 4-5" thick, has a waxy texture, and is lighter in weight than its appearance suggests. A cross is carved deeply into the surface, with a circle at the center of the cross. The City of Manzanita uses a drawing of the beeswax slab on its letterhead. The Hollensteds found a second piece of wax later on, but it was smaller and unmarked.

Pictures of Hollensted and his find were featured in the August, 1966 issue of "True West" magazine, in an article by Ben Maxwell titled

"Messages in Beeswax from a Missing Galleon." The article mentioned that as early as 1814 Indians were digging chunks of wax from the beach sands near the mouth of the Nehalem River, and taking them over Neahkahnie Mountain to trade with Alexander Henry, an Astoria fur trader.

A Carbon-14 test indicated that the wax was formed in 1681, Maxwell said, and the wreck may have occurred between 1700-1710. A long-dead bee found in one piece, plus the correct melting temperature of the substance, proved that it was beeswax and not the mineral wax ozokerite, as some had claimed. Small pieces of wax are still occasionally found. About 10 tons of wax has been uncovered, from False Tillamook Head (Cape Falcon) on the north to Cape Mears on the south. The U.S. Geological Survey says it is beeswax.

What was a Manila galleon and how could it possibly meet a gloomy end on the shores of what is now Oregon?

The Manila galleons carried fabulous riches along the Pacific route for a span of two hundred and fifty years. From the first passage in 1565 until the final voyages in 1815, the Spanish averaged one trip a year between Manila and Acapulco in New Spain, now Mexico. Half-warship, half-freighter, the Manila galleons were well-armed and almost impregnable, the most sophisticated open-ocean ships and most successful warship transport ever built. This was due largely to their distinctive building materials.

The finest woods available, such as Philippine teak and molave, grew in the Philippine Islands, giving quality and strength to the ships' timbers which enabled them to survive so dangerous a voyage.

These galleon voyages were regarded as the longest and most dreaded in the world. A crossing averaged seven months with dangerous weather and diseases a constant threat. The galleons lacked refrigeration, sanitation, medical attention and wholesome food. As well, these strong ships withstood vicious attacks by Moros, Dutch and English.

Regardless of the risk involved in tackling one of these ships, the successful capture of a Spanish galleon meant wealth beyond belief to those men who sailed under no flag. Galleon cargoes included precious gems, spices, carpets and tapestries, beeswax and balsam. Fabric of every texture, porcelains and ornate silverware were included in the wealth pouring across the Pacific.

The lifeblood of the Philippines ran from Manila, to the shores of western Mexico, the New Spain—destination Acapulco. Ships transported trade goods from the Orient eastward; the westbound route returned the profits. The secret Spanish route avoided the perils of "doubling the Cape" and the long Atlantic run to Spain. Ships leaving Manila caught the tradewinds by sailing north out of the Philippines on a northerly course between Japan and the Marianas, then easterly

along a sliding route of 31 to 44 degrees latitude. But capricious tradewinds and storms often forced vessels off their charted courses.

Spanish archives list thirty-three vessels as having been lost on these crossings. Ten of those ships were listed as missing at "unknown locations." Evidences of shipwreck abound on the Oregon Coast. In 1929 a wreck on Nehalem spit came to light and excited the attention of the British Vice-Consul at Astoria, E.M. Cherry. The cost of excavating was beyond the means of any interested parties and soon the sands reclaimed what they had briefly revealed.

There are several possibilities for the beeswax shipwreck believed to be the remains of a lost Manila galleon: The *San Juanillo*, lost in 1578 and the *San Juan* lost in 1586. The *San Antonio*, last seen in 1603 and never heard from again, lies in an unknown location which could be in Oregon waters. The *San Francisco Xavier*, which sailed in 1705, was known to have carried beeswax, and to be making for landfall on the North American coast. The *San Jose* sailing from San Blas, June 16, 1769, is believed by many historians to lie at the foot of Neahkahnie Mountain.

There is some evidence that more than cargo survived these wrecks. On 12-31-1805, Lewis and Clark observed a red-haired Indian. In 1814 fur trader, Ross Cox, mentions a red-haired, freckled Indian with Jack Ramsey tattooed on his arm. Gabriel Franchere of the Pacific Fur Co., writes of an old man who claimed his father was the survivor of a Spanish ship that wrecked at the mouth of the Columbia. And so the tantalizing web of mysteries grew. There is proof the Indians had contact with winged canoes and men who sailed them. They left their children, their possessions, and oft-told stories of their sojourn. What else did they leave behind?

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In the book entitled *Stories of Nehalem*, written by Sam J. Cotton and published in 1915, there are essentially two accounts of the treasure ship based on stories told to early white settlers by Indians in the Nehalem Valley.

Both accounts tell of sailors taking a heavy chest or box far up on the slope of Neahkahnie Mountain and burying it. Both stories also connect the beeswax with the treasure ship, insofar as the time period is concerned.

In one version, the Indians tell of *three* ships engaged in a battle off shore. These strange craft could be seen "throwing smoke" at each other. As a result of the battle, two of the ships sank. The other ship was badly damaged and forced to beach for repairs. As the repairs were completed, the ship attempted to run through the breakers, but it was wrecked and its equipment strewn on the beach. In this account, the

wrecked ship was the mysterious treasure ship, while the beeswax was part of the cargo of one of the ships which sank during the battle.

The other version drawn from Cotton's book is that there was but *one* ship carrying both the treasure and the beeswax. As the story was told, natives found a large quantity of beeswax on the beach and further down the beach they also found the wreck of a monstrous "canoe" with its sails flying in the wind. Based on markings on the beeswax, the date of the wreck was thought to be about 1679.

According to Cotton, there is no doubt that a ship loaded with large amounts of beeswax was wrecked on the stretch of sand between Neahkahnie Mountain and Nehalem Bay. The cargo was on its way to Spanish churches in California and Mexico, and was often found in candle form. Beeswax in large quantities and in various size chunks had been found from near Neahkahnie to a point three miles south. Some pieces had figures, both in Roman numerals and Arabic. One of these with the date 1679 was, at the time of Cotton's book (1915) in possession of the Nehalem Valley Bank. Some beeswax is in the Tillamook Pioneer Museum. In the 1980's, big storms uncovered more beeswax on the beach below the dunes along the spit.

Cotton reports that large quantities of teakwood had been found on the beach, but does not relate the teak to either the treasure ship or to the beeswax ship.

There are conflicting stories of what became of the crew of this ship. Both stories agree that the crew was not more than thirty in number. The most authentic story is that four of the party are said to have taken a trail to the north. While the remaining twenty-six remained in the Neahkahnie area and built cottages overlooking the ocean. Ill-feeling developed later between the whites and the Indians which subsequently resulted in a battle in which all the whites were killed.

Accounts of subsequent search for the treasure contain several indications of visits by white men in past centuries. Rock markings in various locations offered hints or clues to the earliest searchers as to the location of the treasure. Cotton reports that not far from the shore, and near a hotel owned by S.G. Reed, was a rock upon which strange carvings were found. The rock weighed two hundred pounds and is one of those found by Pat Smith. Mysterious characters were chiseled on the flat surface of the rock. The letter W with a cross on each side, the letters DE with eight dots beside them, and below this an arrow to the slope of the mountain are among the keys discovered by the treasure hunters. A short distance from this rock, a smaller one was found with an arrow and two dots, the arrow pointing to the larger rock mentioned above.

Farther up the mountain other rock markings were found, all of which were thought to be associated with those discovered nearer the beach.

The history of the search for the treasure recounted 75 years ago makes an interesting story. It began with the first white settlers in the valley and continued both by people living in the neighborhood and others from Idaho, Iowa, Missouri and the coast states. Cotton reports that nearly every device known to man has been tried to locate the spot. Spiritualism, higher mathematics and about everything else was employed in an effort to solve the problem. Searchers came and went. The most persistent of all the treasure-hunters was Pat Smith who followed a course of mathematical precision. He reportedly spent about nine years in all hunting for the location and did some extensive excavating in the spots his mathematical deductions led him.

TREASURE HOLES

In the book, *Lost Mines and Treasures of the Pacific Northwest* (1957), the author, Ruby El Hult, relates that, "The efforts of treasure hunters during the past century have so honeycombed Neahkahnie Mountain that it is now called the 'mountain of a thousand holes.'"

This may be somewhat exaggerated, but nevertheless, there are numerous examples of these diggings—of which only two recent examples will be described here.

The property in question is located at the north end of Treasure Hunters Lane in Neahkahnie and at the time of this writing was owned by Harold and Laura Lange. Their north property line lies across No-Name Creek. A large vertically excavated shaft, approximately 7-8 feet in diameter and 80 feet in depth has been known to exist at the north end of their garage driveway at a point approximately 40 feet from No-Name Creek and 20 feet west of their east property line. Through the years, the shaft has been filled from time to time with earth and debris and the shaft is now mounded above grade level. (This was dug by two brothers in 1947-48. Permission was given by Barney Lucas, then owner and developer. The road was named Treasure Hunters Lane after them.)

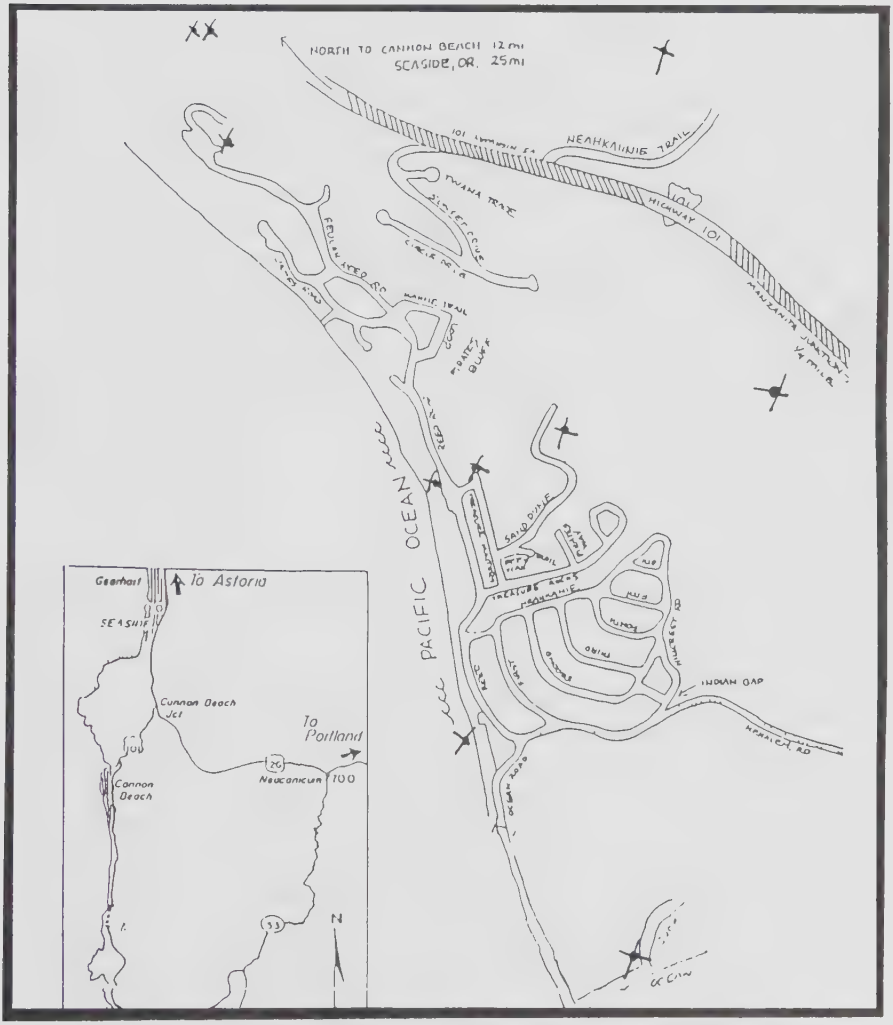
Late in March 1989, Don Acker and Hal Larson visited the premises to examine the area. During the visit, they noted a large sink hole about 15 feet southwest of the shaft mentioned above. The hole was approximately 7-8 feet in diameter and about 18-24 inches deep at the center. Harold Lange, the owner at this time, indicated that this latter hole had only recently appeared.

Subsequently, he had this second shaft filled with a load of earth and rock. He indicated that when the backhoe loader hit the sink

hole, the earth immediately sank to a new depth of about six feet. This second shaft is now also completely filled and mounded.

Lange said that the deed to his property contains a proviso substantially as follows: In the event that treasure is found on this property, one-third belongs to the previous owner, his heirs or his assigns. He purchased the property in 1980. Prior to that date, there were three owners.

As additional information, Mr. Lange's immediate neighbor to the south, Marion Scott, has said that approximately 30 years ago she watched individuals digging a horizontal tunnel between the two vertical shafts on the Lange property.



X Marks the spot of several known digging sites in the Neahkahnie area.

STEWART PROPERTY

Dr. and Mrs. Robert H. Stewart reside at 37950 Reed Road in Neahkahnie. Prior to the construction of their home in 1980, there were also diggings on their property.

The Stewart residence is roughly west of the Lange Property, nearer to the ocean and at a lower elevation. Two separate holes were dug to a depth of 30 feet, spaced approximately 10-12 feet apart. A small shack had been built in one corner of the tree-covered lot which the treasure-hunters presumably used during their excavations. (According to Jean Prentiss, daughter of S. G. Reed, this was a summer vacation project for several years and the people had permission to dig from the owner, a Seattle attorney.)

Residents here continually speculate as to why the treasure seekers dug so deeply in their searches. Logically, wouldn't any self-respecting pirate or seaman take the easy way out and dig only to a more reasonable depth—possibly 6-8 feet? There was no need to dig water wells since springs and streams abound in the area.

The consensus seems to be that our treasure hunters have been digging deeply, in most cases, to compensate for what they calculated to be the effects of erosion and creep, rock slides and landslides from the higher to lower elevations over the 3-4 centuries involved.

We know the treasure hunters' motivations, but we can only speculate as to why they risked their lives in digging so deeply and what strategies and calculations they used to establish these precise points for excavation.

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The following is excerpted from an article by Pat Edley for the *Headlight Herald*. November 23, 1983.

BUD KRETSINGER AND DEAN GRIMES DIG

"More than one treasure is buried on the mountain. The one we want has Biblical connotations. Part of it is the treasure of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, and ancient scrolls written by Moses himself. We think this is the main one. If we get to this one it'll tell us all the secrets of the others." So says L. E. "Bud" Kretsinger and his partner in treasure hunting, Dean Grimes.

Kretsinger has been on the trail of the Neahkahnie treasure for more than 20 years. He was living in Yakima, Washington when he first became interested in the Neahkahnie treasure. He came to the

area in 1961. By July 1962 he had recruited ten men and headed back to Neahkahnie.

The expedition set up camp near the old Neahkahnie golf course. At first, Kretsinger says they thought the treasure was on Neahkahnie water district property. They contacted the owner and made a deal that he was entitled to a part of anything they found. The ten men were on a percentage basis. The Indians had told stories of sitting on the mountain watching the treasure buried, under a diverted creek bed. Supposedly the creek was never diverted back to its original course. Kretsinger and his men put down a five by five foot shaft, 37 feet deep. They tunneled back from the shaft several times, but found nothing and finally had to quit.

"I arrived in Manzanita with 70 one hundred dollar bills in my pocket," Kretsinger recalls. "When we quit, I had $2.35 left."

"But something just drew me," as Kretsinger tells it, and he returned to Manzanita. He got a lease on what was then the Oceanview Tavern, and later bought it. It is now the San Dune Tavern. But the Neahkahnie treasure was always in the back of his mind. "I wanted someone to find it," he says. "At least then I'd be half right."

A group of men formed "Tillamook Treasures" and asked Kretsinger to help them. This group, too, failed to find anything.

Over the years Kretsinger has helped many people who were searching for the treasure with non-scientific methods. "There have been people who tried it with everything imaginable," he says. "Spanish needles, divining rods, plumb-bobs. They've dreamed it was at a certain spot, or a 'psychic said' it was there. One man had it all figured out by calculus. I don't rule anything out, but I haven't tried those methods personally."

Several years ago Kretsinger joined forces with Dean Grimes, of Tillamook. They also added two brothers to the group—Kenny and Roy Hughes—and retained John Hathaway of Tillamook as their attorney.

Grimes, semi-retired due to health problems, has done years of research on the Neahkahnie treasure. According to Grimes, a Colonel Clark, who invented and perfected the infra-red scope, was to assist them in their search, but at that time the infra-red technology was still classified; Clark has since died.

Grimes produces stacks of photos, test reports, and aerial photos, all part of their search for the treasure. "We have used a great deal of modern technology; we've had to use this to prove what the Bible and the rocks already say," Grimes says. "All that's used is what we can read from the rocks, that coincides with the Bible."

According to Grimes, there are 30-odd rocks, only 12 of which coincide with the Bible. Of those 12, Kretsinger and Grimes are using only four. Grimes explains, "The twelve stones came from the Wailing Wall. They were placed on Neahkahnie to mark the hiding place of

an immense Biblical treasure. The Bible says it's there, my camera says it's there."

The treasure hunters have done extensive research on the rocks in libraries. "The rocks aren't Indian doings," Kretsinger says. "Indian rock drawings are more crude, and often painted on rather than carved." And Kretsinger adds, they have had an expert on art, Spanish history, and art interpretation study the rocks, to substantiate their authenticity. The men do not have the rocks in their possession; they work from close-up photos of them. Kretsinger stresses, "We ourselves have never taken rocks from the mountain. We have brought in scientific equipment to try to locate caverns."

So why haven't they found the treasure? "It's impossible to get an honest permit," they say. Their group is disappointed in the state agencies. "Some people have been just excellent, very helpful. But," Kretsinger adds, "When we've had to deal with local agencies, it has been a mess." So far they estimate it has cost them over $5000 in time, trips, etc., to get their permits.

"It's very frustrating to try to work with the state," Kretsinger says. "They'll take half of anything found, but don't help an ounce." Grimes adds, "All we're asking is help—cooperation. It would help the state." Both men stress that they are not after the treasure for personal gain. "We think it would benefit the whole earth tremendously, and we're willing to give it to the world, freely."

As the treasure hunters relate, they had a permit for three test digs, but were stopped by the state after only two. "The Park Department filled in the dig after we dug the second hole," Kretsinger says. "And they kept the $650 bond we put up. We were shut down the last time because there was no state representative on the site. The state said we had to have an archaeologist, and gave us a list of them. We got one; and after a short time she left, saying she was only required to be on hand for Indian artifacts. And we were certainly not finding any Indian artifacts. We did hit gas at 14 feet, just like the gas they hit in King Tut's tomb. We hit it several times, in fact. We'd like to use a backhoe. We're concentrated; we know where it is. But now, we're at a standstill."

As a matter of fact, they did use a backhoe once. Kretsinger hired a backhoe, went in at daybreak, and was caught. He received a citation for criminal mischief and trespassing, which was later dropped. That experience hasn't dampened his enthusiasm. He cheerfully shows the way to the digs.

A bare patch of dark earth and rocks shows where the digs were filled in. "You see that big rock down there?" Kretsinger points to a spot near the cliff edge. "That's marked; it's one we use to measure from." The rock sits on a small point of land, and even on a calm day

the ocean crashes into the sheer basalt cliffs below. A part of the ancient carvings are barely visible on the rock.

Both Kretsinger and Grimes say that all they want is a chance to prove themselves. The men estimate that over the years, between them, they have spent over $250,000 on the search.

Their attempts to obtain permits for excavations on Neahkahnie apparently came up against a stone wall in the local office of the State Parks Department. At a meeting with State Representative Paul Hanneman on October 28, 1983 Grimes produced a permit good from May 1, 1983 to November 31, 1983. Hanneman is checking into why the permit wasn't honored.

Kretsinger sums up the optimism the group feels concerning their hunt for the elusive treasure of Neahkahnie. "Originally we figured we had a 1 percent chance of finding the treasure. Now we figure we have a 1 percent chance of not finding it."

(Bud Kretsinger is now deceased.)

TREASURE OF NEAHKAHNIE

by
Don Viles

January 1990

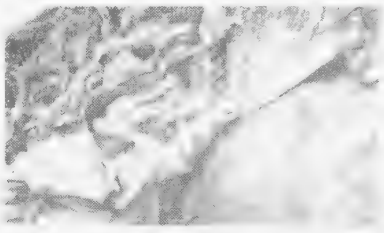
It was sometime in 1969 when I discovered the meaning of Neahkahnie's "Treasure Rocks." Since school days, I had always been interested in the treasure legend of the mountain, with its tales of Spanish galleons, pirates, booming cannons and buried treasure. In the late 1800's the treasure rocks had been discovered only a few hundred feet from the edge of the beach, at the base of Neahkahnie Mountain. About a mile to the south, on the beach, were the remains of an old teak-built ship.

On this day, I was looking at some pictures of the so-called treasure rocks with the strange marks engraved on their surfaces, when I suddenly realized the engravings represented compass bearings! My background of past coastal seafaring days now came to the fore. I theorized that when this ship had wrecked, the crew had buried cargo and then proceeded to record the site by using a pattern of "bearings" to take a "sight" on the location; the actual position of the cargo deposit not being marked so as to save it from loss due to purloining by others.

Wayne Jensen, of Tillamook, had been gathering printed data about the "treasure" for many years. I called him and stated I had the secret to Neahkahnie and felt his data collection would be an asset to

discovery. An agreement was made to work together on a treasure search and to divide equally any booty found.

It required considerable research to establish the exact original sites of the treasure rocks as they had been moved several times. When this had been accomplished, mostly by Wayne's efforts and his records, I proceeded to track out on foot one of the bearing marks and promptly found a cliff face on the mountain that had numerous glyphs. Deeply engraved was the word "AUGUR." The first choice of a compass bearing to trace out, and the discovery of "Augur Cliff" was somewhat fortuitous and eventually proved to be quite advantageous. The quest now consisted of Wayne's search for more data and my efforts to plot an overall structure to the known bearing marks. Nothing was accomplished until I deciphered some of the cliff engravings as being measurements. Believing the origin of the mystery to be Spanish, and coupling more logic to the original theory of cargo deposit, we deduced that sailors would not carry heavy loads far from the ocean beach, so the Spanish "pi" (about 11 English inches) was used as a measurement unit in the plotting.



With the pi measure, many maps were drawn and several sites chosen as possible cargo deposits. We worked on weekends during all kinds of weather. Wayne cut brush while I used a deep-seek metal detector. We found nothing.

I was discouraged. I knew I was on the track of something hitherto unknown, but I could not put together the right pieces for a solution. While lamenting the result of getting nowhere, my wife suggested the use of the Spanish vara as a unit of distance for the measurements found at Augur. I scoffed, "That would put us way up on the mountain and no sailor is going to pack anything that far. Her reply, "What can you lose? You two haven't found anything so far." Her suggestion proved to be an important part of the final solution.

In the early times there were three different lengths of varas used in Spanish dominions. I began the long process of plotting and drawing new maps in three different measurements. Also, plottings were made on overlays of large air photos. Several new searches were made but nothing was found until we used the "Valencia" vara plottings. On this search a site was chosen that placed us one mile up the mountainside. We found nothing until Wayne suddenly discovered he was standing on

the object of our search. Covered by a dense layer of ferns and tree needles was a large circular platform of stones about 10 feet in diameter. In the middle of it was a squared shaft of rock with a deep groove carved in two sides and across one end. We had found the engraving for the unit of measure used in the original work. It was 36 inches. An English yard!

My plotting with the Valencia vara had produced results because it was equal to 35.9 English inches. Also the finding of the mound and measurement stone revealed my plottings to be off about 200 feet to the west in one mile; this later was found to be because of the change in the earth's magnetics over a period of 400 years. Now, with the magnetic adjustment, tracing out the compass bearings became quite easy. We had the key to the plotting. Many more marked stones were found. If a stone was not found at a plotted site, there would be a hole where someone in the past had discovered a marked rock and then dug a hole in search of treasure.

Subsequently much time and research revealed we had discovered a plane table triangulation survey made in 1579 by the crew of the "Golden Hind", Frances Drake, Captain.

The discovery, artifacts, and all documentation of the long search was offered to the State of Oregon for the price of remuneration for time spent. Presentation was made to Governor Tom McCall, Parks Director Dave Talbot and the Oregon Historical Society. It was declined.

The Neahkahnie quest ended, but I was puzzled by some parts of the research. I had spent some time as a commercial fisherman on the west coast of North America and the old Spanish marine records of this coastline that I had studied did not match up with my marine observations of the past. I decided to find out why. More research and more plotting revealed that the discovery history of Western North America, over a period of years from 1500 to 1846 had been faked by all nations involved. Like gold miners who had found a mother lode, the Spanish gave out false locations. Other nations endeavoring to obtain a piece of the rich prize that was Western North America, followed the Spanish lead and also counterfeited their records. The result of all this intrigue is that today's scholars use false documentation as basic records to work with; consequently they continue to enlarge upon our fake history with erroneous papers on archaeology, environment, history, ethnology, etc.

The Neahkahnie treasure is Francis Drake's survey with which he claimed for England all land north of 45 degrees North Latitude. Political intrigue kept this fact hidden from the public, but England used same in all her claims to Western North America during later diplomatic negotiations.

It has been 20 years since I first discovered the meaning of the Treasure Rock marks. The research still continues with unraveling more

and more of our fictitious record and revealing historical truth. It is now a quest of only personal enjoyment. The public has been so well brainwashed by 500 years of false written and printed documentation concerning the western part of the continent, that it is extremely doubtful the truth can, or will, ever be recognized.

THE LOST ENGLISH CLAIM TO THE NORTHWEST

by

Wayne Jensen, Director of the Tillamook Pioneer Museum

When the name Neahkahnie is mentioned, people think of treasure. The Indians of the area told early white settlers about a ship anchoring, men coming ashore and carrying a chest up on the mountain. They dug a hole, so the stories said, put the chest in it. They then killed one of their number and put him in the hole with the chest. They moved stones around, then the crew returned to the ship and sailed away. The Indians would not go near this spot, fearing the spirit of the dead man.

This legend has been written about for over a hundred years. Marked stones found on the mountain, and visions of buried treasure, have caused men to dig holes all over the mountain. The treasure stories were given a lot of publicity and believed to be true when two large stones with markings on them were found on the mountain close to the ocean.

The early settlers and present-day treasure seekers have searched upon the mountain for the mysterious treasure, but it has always eluded the searchers. The only things discovered were stones placed on the mountain, with carvings on them. This has led to speculative and exaggerated treasure stories, making this area the site of one of the best-known "buried treasure" legends, second only to Oak Island on the east coast.

In 1968, Don Viles, of Garibaldi, and I started putting all the stories together. We had early photos and stories about the marked stones and the treasure seekers. Where to start?

At this time I went to see Mr. Ed Windle, who had one of the stones he had found. This stone was discovered in 1947 when a brush fire burned a ridge a short way from the beach. When I was photographing the stone, Mr. Windle mentioned that he had found the stone atop a mound of stones.

We found this mound much later, after some searching. It was ten feet in diameter and two feet high, with the stone I refer to as Windle's rock.

While I was meeting with Mr. Windle, Don Viles was up on the mountain looking for some markings on a cliff face that he'd been told about. Don found the markings, and among them was the word "AUGUR." In an effort to find the "why" of the markings and what they meant, we searched during the winter when the vegetation was down and the leaves off the trees. That way we could see the ground close at hand and at a distance.

After months of searching, I found a large stone covered with moss, with a "V" carved on the side. Each leg of the V was six inches. Near this spot a triangle of stones was found, with six-foot sides; at the top was a large stone with a V carved on it pointing up the hill.

After searching the area I found a mound of stones on the north line up the hill. Here was the answer to where the treasure was buried, or so we thought. This mound was ten feet in diameter and two feet high. When the stones were removed, the outer perimeter was left in place. With all the large stones removed, it was found the first layer was of small stones, placed flat to form a footing for the larger stones.

We noticed a depression, and an approximately two-foot-square and two-foot-deep hole was dug. No treasure. The builders of the mound had burned wood, and only charcoal was left. Who did this and why? was the question of the hour. What we had found was a measured north-south line, with a ten-foot diameter platform of rocks at each end.

Then another piece of the puzzle was discovered. As the north mound was taken apart, we found a stone fallen over, with the root of a large spruce tree grown over it. The tree had grown alongside the mound. The stone was square, with a groove carved up one side, across the top and down the other side. This line, or groove, is 36 inches long exactly, and is the measurement by which the survey was laid out—the English yard.

Samples of charcoal from the hole under the mound were sent to the University of Georgia for radio-carbon dating. The date of the sample was 1095 A.D. A date of 1910 was given to the tree which grew alongside the mound.

By studying aerial photographs, and the ground, we found that the 1632 carved on Windle's stone represented 1632 yards. Going north from the south mound it was approximately 1632 yards to the north mound. A survey was the final conclusion. Using this idea, more marked stones were found. Some were on the north-south line, some on ridges, where stones were placed on mounds. All the stones were removed from the immediate area. The theory as to why this was done is a land claim. There has been no recorded survey that we have been able to find.

A drawing of one of the original rocks in 1895 shows the word "Deos" along a side of the "W." This spelling of DEOS has only been found on a sketch made by Sir Francis Drake or one of his crewmen of

Nombre De Deos, Central America. Drake's drawing was the only place this spelling has been found using an E instead of an I.

This survey appears to be a 16th century triangulation. Knowing that Sir Francis Drake was on the coast of America in 1579, and was in a bay (which everyone is looking for), the famous "Port New Albion" has been fitted into this area, possibly Short Sands Beach (Smugglers' Cove).

Some marked and stacked stones were found on the west side of the mountain. This appears to be a smaller survey.

In 1976 I wrote to the American Society of Civil Engineers describing what had been found. They in turn sent a copy of the letter to Professor Robert J. Schultz at Oregon State University. He suggested that this would be a good project for a student working on his Masters.

Mr. Phil Costaggini accepted. We now have an on-the-ground survey of the rock mounds and other stones we know of.

I would like to add that no Indian artifacts or any other artifacts were found in association with the stones.

TREASURE SEEKERS: ORVAL KELLER

(As Told To the Treasure Committee)

Orval Keller is one of many men who have searched for the legendary treasure of Neahkahnie Mountain. He willingly brought out his collection of evidence of such a treasure, for members of the Nehalem Valley Historical Society.

Aside from numerous pictures and maps, Keller has a large assortment of rocks taken from the mountain. He believes that these rocks were hidden on the mountain by the Spanish conqueror Cortez, marked by a now-lost art of placing secret symbols on rocks, usually in the form of animal shapes.

He has taken the rocks out at different times, from different stages in his digging. Among those he displayed were shapes indicating dogs, ducks, a foot, rabbit, elephant, plus a face that Keller says is "exactly like the one on the mountain." (This refers to a large rock by Highway 101, which many people believe resembles an Indian.) A duck means water, Keller says, and there is water where he was digging. A rabbit, he adds, always means "gold", and a foot or track indicates that one is on the right track, "keep on going."

"A bell is a pirate symbol," he said, showing a rock with a bell depicted on it. He also pointed out a baboon's head, visible on the same rock. "All these rocks are authentic," he says. "I've never carved them, never touched them with a tool; only cleaned and polished some of them."

The place where Keller now hopes to do further excavation is a tunnel, he believes, that has been filled in with a man-made, concrete-like substance.

Years back, according to Keller, Dean Grimes, then of Tillamook Treasures, found a rock with a cross on it. The cross was visible only under certain conditions, and the group tipped it over, to keep it a secret. "Many of Tillamook Treasures' rocks have disappeared, and one of mine disappeared with them," Keller adds.

He also says there is a face in a chunk of beeswax, and "the beeswax and the gold go together."

Keller and his search for the Neahkahnie treasure were featured on a "Northwest Mysteries" segment of P.M. Magazine on TV in the spring of 1989. The program showed Keller, some of his diggings, and views of Neahkahnie Mountain.

"This mountain, north of Manzanita," explained the commentator, "is renowned for its view of the ocean; it is Neahkahnie. Indians called the mountain the home of the fire spirit. Others call it the home of buried treasure. No one's sure how the legend began. Over 180 years ago the Indians were telling the settlers of this region of the ships that once sailed these waters. Men from the ships brought ashore a large chest, according to the Indians, and buried it somewhere on the mountain, marked by a strangely carved rock. Searchers have been looking for treasure on the mountain ever since."

"Few have searched for the treasure as long or as hard as Orval Keller," the commentator continued. "And after searching the mountain for more than 20 years, he now believes he's on the verge of a breakthrough." The commentator went on to explain about the rocks in the shape of animals, and Keller's beliefs concerning them.

"Another clue to the Neahkahnie mystery can be found 25 miles away, at the Pioneer Museum in Tillamook," the commentator went on. "This rock discovered 40 years ago on the mountain, atop a mound of stones, contains the symbol '1632.' Museum director, Wayne Jensen, believes it was a survey marker, because 1632 yards to the north was found another mound. Jensen says it is a survey, because 'no one would have spent all this time marking stones and building mounds to bury something.' Jensen believes the survey may have been done by Sir Francis Drake, who came ashore in 1579 north of San Francisco; exactly where, no one knows.

"If Jensen's hypothesis is correct, it would mean the museum's rocks are treasures in themselves. But Orval Keller doesn't buy this theory. He's convinced his rocks are vestiges of a secret code."

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TREASURE SEEKERS: KEN HUGHES

(As Told To the Treasure Committee)

Ken Hughes, of Hillsboro, is another searcher on the trail of Neahkahnie Mountain's elusive treasure. Hughes recently applied to the State for a permit to dig for the treasure. The State denied the permit, but Hughes is persisting in his attempts.

Hughes says he has had a lot of problems with the State. Where he wants to search is all Oregon State park land. He has mapped out the area and has all the evidence, he says. "I want to get the permit, so I can prove that something's there," he adds. "If I could solve it, I think it would really build up the state, Tillamook county and Manzanita. It would help the tourist business."

Hughes was formerly associated with Dean Grimes and Bud Kretsinger in their search for the legendary treasure. Jim Edwards, Kretsinger's grandson, is now working with Hughes. Edwards also has a carved rock recently found in a stream on the mountain. The water-worn rock is another mystery, as the carvings resemble neither marks on other "treasure rocks" nor Indian pictographs.

As the basis for his proposed excavation Hughes uses an oftmentioned and photographed treasure rock. Its markings include a "W", two crosses, "DE", and a series of dots. The rock shows an old Indian trail, Hughes thinks. "It's as plain as can be," he says. "No matter how I look at the rock, it comes out the same." To back up his theory he shows a recent snapshot of the Indian trail.

He also uses what he refers to as a base stone, located near the cliff edge on Neahkahnie. His choice of site results from new interpretations of the marked stones. Hughes thinks an Englishman,

not a Spaniard, carved the "DE" on the marked rock. An Englishman may have been on a Spanish ship, he says, or it may have been an English ship.

Hughes got most of his pictures, papers, and maps, from Dean Grimes, when he gave up on treasure hunting. Then Hughes put together the bits and pieces of evidence.

"We feel we have real evidence now," Hughes says. "A lot of people, even archaeologists, go by theory; but you have to have something—like a location—to start from. And I feel we have that." Hughes suspects that not all marked rocks are original "treasure rocks." Treasure hunters may also have marked rocks, he says. He cites one large boulder, on a cliff, that once held a number of ancient markings, now nearly obliterated by recent carvings of names and dates.

A newcomer to the hunt for Neahkahnie's treasure would have a hard time finding anything, Hughes says, as so many rocks have been removed, and things changed, over the years. Many treasure hunters have carried off marked stones. And rocks, Hughes says, are about all that could have been used for landmarks, aside from the terrain itself, as trees wouldn't necessarily be permanent. As proof Hughes says an old photo of Neahkahnie Mountain shows no trees on it.

"You hear stories about the beeswax," he adds. "One place where we (Bud Kretsinger, Dean Grimes and Hughes) dug, we found bits of rust mixed with beeswax. Where did the beeswax come from?"

Hughes had never even heard of Neahkahnie until 1980, when he had a plumbing business in Garibaldi. One day he heard talk of Tony Mareno and his search for the treasure. A few days later, says Hughes, he was talking to a friend, Dean Grimes. When the treasure stories were mentioned, Grimes told him, "If you want to know something about the treasure, talk to me. Come by the house, and I'll show you."

Later when Hughes visited Grimes at his home, Grimes offered to show him some things relating to his own search for the treasure. Six months later, Hughes began to get involved with the search for whatever the "treasure mountain" might hold. With Grimes he visited Neahkahnie later in 1980. The following summer, they got together with Bud Kretsinger, who had sought the treasure for more then twenty years, and had already done a lot of excavating and research. This association lasted until Kretsinger's death several years later.

"If we found the treasure it wouldn't benefit just us, but also the state, the people of the state," Hughes repeats. "If the treasure actually is found, it could be one of the major historical sites on the west coast, because according to legend that stuff was buried 300 years ago."

"There's too much evidence," he maintains, "there has to be something there. I'd like to solve it—prove if it's right or wrong.

There's so much concrete evidence, something's got to come to light. If anything's found, it'll make history."

"And yet," he adds, "if a treasure does come to light, I'll always feel that Bud Kretsinger's been cheated, as he worked so hard for so long on it."

The search for the Neahkahnie treasure goes back over a hundred years. Many theories have been put forth as to the correct interpretation of the carved stones; one says they are survey markers for a proposed English colony. The popular theory is that they hold the key to a buried treasure site. If Hughes does obtain his excavation permit, perhaps Neahkahnie's secret will at last be revealed.

"It's something I can't walk away from," Hughes admits. "Since I got involved I've lost my home, business, and a lot of other things. I try to walk away from it, but then I keep finding more evidence. I *couldn't* walk away from it now."

ED FIRE (TONY MARENO) INTERVIEW — JUNE 24, 1990

(As Told to the Treasure Committee)

Ed Fire has spent the better part of 25 years researching and digging for the Neahkahnie Treasure. He says he got started on his quest when he moved to Salem, Oregon, where he first heard about the treasure. He'd done some exploration on Arizona's Lost Dutchman mine, and a young couple living in the same apartment building asked him if he'd ever heard about another treasure—the one said to be on Neahkahnie Mountain.

Fire hadn't; so he, his wife, and the other couple took a ride over to see the treasure rocks, which were then sitting outside a real estate office in Neahkahnie. Intrigued, Fire made sketches of these carved stones, studied them, and eventually decided the BKS carved on one of the rocks indicated the treasure would be found on the beach. He decided he could sneak a bulldozer down onto the sand, find the treasure and be out again before anyone noticed. Fire, then known as Tony Mareno, now laughs at the notion he could sneak a bulldozer anywhere. Naturally he and his bulldozer were apprehended.

Fire was then told he would have to get a permit to dig. However, when he went in pursuit of the permit he was told there was no such thing. That didn't stop him, and after years of meetings, negotiations, and sheer persistence, he saw a law passed calling for and governing the use of treasure trove permits. This was known as the Tony Mareno bill. At last Fire obtained his first permit, returned to the beach, and began serious digging.

Fire and his backers brought in electronic gear, sunk a wood shaft, and ran a tube down inside it. At 22 feet the tube hung up. Fire sent down a diver named Jim Hansen. They found the steel casing of the tube hung up on what they identified as a capstone. More equipment was brought in to get past this obstacle. When Fire took a generator-operated light into the shaft, he discovered a ship's mast, the capstone and a big stone tablet. He photographed this tablet and started work to decipher it.

Meanwhile hostilities mounted against Fire. He claims he was shot at from the mountain, threatened, and was unable to buy food or water in Manzanita. Then he had to pull out. His permit was expiring and he couldn't get it renewed except for winter time, when the tides were too high to excavate on the beach. Thus ended this effort.

When he deciphered the stone tablet from his beach excavation, he claimed the tablet showed him the "W" on other rocks referred to a star constellation. Fire feels the markings on the carved rocks are nothing but geometry. In his research he has worked mostly from books and pictures, especially "Treasure Hunting in the Northwest" by Ruby El Hult. And he has flown over the area, taking pictures.

His research, coupled with discoveries made while excavating on the beach, convinced him to move the site of his excavation up onto the mountain itself. Here he claims to have found a series of tunnels and chambers, plus evidence that people had at one time been living in these tunnels. Fire says they left behind their armor, muskets, and in some instances, their bodies.

Some of his finds include an anchor chain off a ship, hair from a red man, and wedges used in construction of the chambers. He found an L-bar which checks out as being made from pure iron. It was discovered 9 feet down, sitting on two big flat rocks, and he says it was 50 varas (Spanish measurement equal to approximately one yard) from the L bar to where the gold was—only 9 feet down.

Fire has in his possession a piece of timber dated at 40,000 years old that appears to have been hewn, and comes from the tunnel system he discovered. He's found other pieces of wood he feels were used to dig the crawl tunnels through the clay. He has also found a domed chamber. According to Fire this tunnel system was in fairly good condition when he first discovered it, but now is deteriorating due to natural conditions.

Fire has deciphered the code of the stone tablets, and found the tunnel system in the ground. He has crawled through these tunnels into chambers, a system of underground excavations that corresponds with the "W" on some of the marked rocks. Now Fire says he knows where the treasure is. Only the legalities and restrictions posed by the state keep him from retrieving it.

When Mr. Fire relates his tale, one is mesmerized by his enthusiasm and captivated by what he claims to have found. Unfortunately his find remains a tantalizing mystery to the public, because he has been hampered in his search by regulations enforced by the State Parks. Fire remains certain, however, that the treasure will eventually come up. And when it does, he envisions a museum on site, with the artifacts remaining in Tillamook County.

SOPHISTICATED TREASURE HUNT

Many treasure seekers have come and gone in the past century, and in their searches, they have undoubtedly employed every means and used every device known to man.

One of the latest and probably the most technically sophisticated of modern searchers was an individual who claimed in 1989 to have located the wreck of a Spanish Manila galleon in Nehalem Bay. This ship, named the *San Francisco Xavier* was believed to have disappeared in 1705, and reportedly was buried beneath the bottom of the bay, less than a mile from the river's mouth. The ship was alleged to have been carrying a rich cargo of exotic Chinese porcelain, jewels and coins.

It was claimed that the ship had been located by spectrographic infrared photography. There were also claims of helicopter-borne equipment that could detect metal eight hundred feet beneath the ground surface or 180 feet below the water surface. This equipment was reportedly capable of pinpointing metal objects and detecting a two pound gold bar at the above depths.

Several newspapers reported developments in this case in the fall of 1989. The *Headlight-Herald* carried articles on July 26, August 2 and September 6; while the *Oregonian* issues of July 23 and July 26, and the *Daily Astorian* of October 11, covered various aspects of the search.

The treasure hunt was stalled for several weeks by an assortment of unanswered questions, murky regulations, bureaucratic impediments, salvage permits and financial problems. Finally, the treasure hunter called it quits, presumably on the financial issue and too much "static" from local authorities.

To complete the story, in October 1989, the Oregon State Land Board placed a moratorium on permits to search on state lands. The moratorium is extended until the legislature can review conflicts in terming "archaeological sites" and "treasure troves." The questions are whether a shipwreck is a "treasure trove" or an "archaeological site"; and who is entitled to what portion of any discovery, if ever found.

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While the riddle of the rocks found on Neahkahnie has yet to be solved to everyone's satisfaction, they **are** proof that someone left a record of something—even if it's only sailor's graffiti.

"Under Neahkahnie's mighty base, the sea or someone has hewn out caves and grottoes, where the natives say their fathers told of other treasure being hid away . . . . " (*Pioneering Days of Oregon History*, Vol. 1)

Cotton, in Stories of Nehalem, concludes his narrative of the treasure as follows, "The treasure of Neahkahnie may never be unearthed; there may be no treasure buried there. But sometime in the dim past someone visited this shore and left these signs."

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Chunks of beeswax, other relics from the Manzanita Beach, and the oft-mentioned marked rocks are on display in the Tillamook Pioneer Museum. The rocks, while interesting to view, are in worn condition. Nevertheless, they hold the key to a mesmerizing puzzle. Perhaps you might be the one to solve it.

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